

Small Group Guide: Advent Week 2 War & Peace - The Coming Kingdom



Opening Prayer

Begin your time together by thanking God for the peace He offers through Christ and asking the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion and understanding.

Sermon Overview

This sermon explores the dual nature of peace in Advent: the peace we currently have with God through Christ's first coming, and the ultimate physical peace we will experience when He returns. Using Isaiah 9:6-7 and Revelation 12 and 21, we see how Christ's birth initiated spiritual warfare while simultaneously offering us reconciliation with God.

Key Takeaways

1. **Advent is about two comings:** We celebrate Christ's first coming while anticipating His return
2. **Peace with God is present:** Through Christ's sacrifice, our sins are no longer counted against us
3. **Spiritual warfare intensified:** Christ's incarnation escalated the cosmic battle between good and evil
4. **Ultimate peace is coming:** When Christ returns, He will establish physical peace and make all things new

5. **We have a choice:** Each person must decide whether to accept God's mercy or face His judgment
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Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text (15-20 minutes)

1. **Read Isaiah 9:6-7.** How does this passage apply to both Christ's first coming and His second coming? What does "government on His shoulders" mean in both contexts?
2. **Read Revelation 12:1-6.** What surprised you about this spiritual perspective on the Christmas story? How does knowing about the dragon's attempt to destroy the child change your understanding of the nativity?
3. **Read Revelation 21:1-5.** What specific details about the new heaven and new earth stand out to you? Why do you think God chooses to "make all things new" rather than "make all new things"?

Personal Reflection (20-25 minutes)

4. The sermon states that "we have peace with God, but we have an even greater hope in the peace that's coming." How does this distinction between present spiritual peace and future physical peace impact your daily life?
5. Revelation 12:11 says believers "overcome him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony." What does this mean practically for spiritual warfare in your life? How can you apply this truth this week?
6. The image of God wiping away tears from every eye is deeply personal and tender. What tears in your life are you looking forward to God wiping away? How does this hope sustain you during difficult times?
7. The sermon mentions that during Advent we live in "anticipation." What are you anticipating about Christ's return? How does this anticipation shape your priorities?

Application and Action (20-25 minutes)

8. The sermon challenges us: "With the time we have left, it is up to us what we're going to do with that message." What is one specific way you can invest in bringing others into the kingdom during this Advent season?

9. Revelation 21:8 lists those who will face judgment. How should this sobering reality affect:
- Our urgency in sharing the gospel?
 - Our compassion for unbelievers?
 - Our own walk with Christ?
10. The sermon emphasizes that God "desires that all should be saved" and "loves to bring mercy." How can your small group demonstrate God's mercy to others this Christmas season? Identify one practical action step.
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Practical Applications

This Week

- **Daily Reflection:** Each day, read one verse from Revelation 21:1-8 and journal about what aspect of the new heaven and earth you're most looking forward to.
- **Prayer Focus:** Pray specifically for one person who doesn't know Christ, asking God to open their heart to the peace He offers.
- **Testimony Practice:** Write out your testimony focusing on how Christ has given you peace with God. Be prepared to share it when opportunities arise.

This Month

- **Study the Context:** Read the entire Christmas narrative in Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2 with fresh eyes, considering the spiritual warfare happening behind the scenes.
- **Advent Anticipation:** Create a visual reminder (artwork, journal, phone background) of Revelation 21:4-5 to keep the hope of Christ's return before you.
- **Kingdom Investment:** Identify one way to use your time, talents, or treasure to advance God's kingdom before Christmas.

This Season

- **Share the Complete Gospel:** Look for opportunities to share not just about Christmas, but about Christ's return and the choice everyone must make.
- **Community Service:** As a group, serve those experiencing pain, sorrow, or tears—offering a glimpse of the comfort Christ will ultimately bring.

Memory Verse

Revelation 21:4-5a "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. Then He who sat on the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.'"

Closing Reflection

Take 5-10 minutes for silent reflection on these questions:

- How has my understanding of Advent peace deepened tonight?
- What is God calling me to do in response to this message?
- Who needs to hear about the peace Christ offers?

Closing Prayer

Have group members share one thing they're anticipating about Christ's return, then pray together, thanking God for:

- The peace we have with Him through Christ's sacrifice
 - The hope of His return and the restoration of all things
 - The opportunity to share this message with others
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Leader Notes

- Be sensitive to group members who may be experiencing significant pain or loss—the promise of God wiping away tears may be especially meaningful to them
- The topic of judgment (Revelation 21:8) may be uncomfortable but is essential to the complete gospel message. Handle with both truth and grace
- Encourage the group to see Advent as a season of both celebration and anticipation, not just nostalgia
- Consider having someone share how the hope of Christ's return has sustained them through a difficult season

5-Day Advent Devotional: The Peace of Christ's Coming



Day 1: The Child Born for Peace

Reading: Isaiah 9:6-7

Devotional:

"Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." These familiar words echo through centuries, proclaiming both a historical reality and a future promise. When Jesus came as a baby in Bethlehem, He initiated God's peace plan for humanity. Yet this passage speaks beyond the manger—it points to eternal government, endless peace, and righteous rule. The titles given to this child—Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace—reveal His divine nature and eternal purpose. Today, reflect on how Jesus brings you peace with God through His sacrifice. Consider how this same Jesus will one day establish perfect peace on earth. What areas of your life need His peace today?

Day 2: The Spiritual Battle Behind Christmas

Reading: Revelation 12:1-6

Devotional:

Behind the beautiful nativity story lies an intense spiritual battle. Revelation pulls back the curtain to show us the dragon waiting to devour the child destined to rule all nations. This wasn't just Herod's jealous rage—it was Satan's desperate attempt to stop God's redemption plan. The enemy knew what was at stake when Jesus was born. Yet God's plan prevailed. The child was born, lived, died, rose again, and ascended to the Father's throne. This Christmas season, remember that your peace with God came at great cost and through fierce spiritual warfare. Jesus conquered on your behalf. When you face spiritual opposition today, remember: the victory is already won through Christ's blood and your faithful testimony.

Day 3: Overcoming Through the Blood of the Lamb

Reading: Revelation 12:7-12

Devotional:

"They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony." This powerful declaration reveals the secret to spiritual victory. Satan, the accuser, constantly brings charges against believers before God's throne. But the blood of Jesus silences every accusation. Your testimony—your lived experience of Christ's transforming power—becomes a weapon against the enemy's lies. Notice the complete commitment: "they did not love their lives to the death." True peace with God produces fearless faith. The enemy is already defeated; he just doesn't want you to know it. Today, declare the power of Christ's blood over your life. Share your testimony of what Jesus has done for you. Stand firm knowing the accuser has been cast down.

Day 4: God Will Wipe Away Every Tear

Reading: Revelation 21:1-5

Devotional:

Imagine the moment when God Himself gently wipes away your tears. Every sorrow you've carried, every pain you've endured, every loss you've mourned—all will be tenderly removed by the hands of your Creator. This is the ultimate peace we anticipate during Advent: not just peace with God, but complete physical and emotional restoration. The former things—death, sorrow, crying, pain—will pass away because God makes all things new. Notice He doesn't make all new things; He restores what sin broke. Your broken pieces, your wounded heart, your damaged relationships—God promises to restore them to their intended glory. This Christmas, while we celebrate Jesus' first coming, let's also anticipate His return when every tear will be wiped away forever.

Day 5: Choose Peace or Judgment

Reading: Revelation 21:6-8; John 3:16-21

Devotional:

God offers humanity a choice: receive His free gift of peace through Christ, or face judgment on our own merit. The invitation is clear—"I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts." Those who overcome through faith in Jesus will inherit everything and be called God's children. But those who reject His mercy choose judgment by default. God desires all to be saved; He takes no delight in judgment. Yet as a just God, He honors our free will. This Advent season, have you truly received God's peace? Are there areas where you're still trying to be your own god? Surrender them today. And consider: who in your life needs to hear this message of peace before Jesus returns? The time of anticipation is now—what will you do with it?

As you journey through this Advent season, remember that Christmas celebrates both peace accomplished (through Jesus' first coming) and peace anticipated (through His promised return). Live in the reality of peace with God today while eagerly awaiting the day when He makes all things new.